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# Quidlibet audendi potestas: Deviant Word Order in the Odes of Horace

Henry R. Bauer

*University of Nebraska-Lincoln*

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*QUIDLIBET AUDENDI POTESTAS:*  
DEVIANT WORD ORDER IN THE *ODES* OF HORACE

An Undergraduate Honors Thesis  
Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of  
University Honors Program Requirements  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

by  
Henry Robert Bauer, BA  
Classical Languages  
College of Arts and Sciences

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Faculty Mentors:  
Matthew P. Loar, Ph.D., Classical Languages  
Robert J. Gorman, Ph.D., Classical Languages

## Abstract

This senior thesis, entitled "*Quidlibet audendi potestas*: Deviant Word Order in the Odes of Horace," represents a sort of dry run for a method of answering empirically the questions of whether, how, and how much the word order of Latin verse systematically differs from that of Latin prose. The present project consists of comparing the attested word orders in Horace for cases of two frequent grammatical phenomena – clause-initial verbs and premodifier hyperbaton – against the prose data presented by A.M. Devine and L.D. Stephens in their monograph, *Latin Word Order: Structured Meaning and Information*. Devine and Stephens' work was chosen as a jumping-off point because of its unequalled scope and use of modern theories of pragmatics. The conclusion of the empirical analysis below is that the data from Horace differs from Devine and Stephens' data more dramatically in the case of premodifier hyperbaton – alleged by the authors of *LWO* to be a "properly syntactic phenomenon" – than in the case of clause-initial verbs-regarded by Devine and Stephen as mainly pragmatically conditioned. It is hypothesized that the more frequent breaking of properly syntactic than mainly pragmatic rules is a general feature of Latin poetry, and some arguments are given to lend intuitive support to this hypothesis. As mentioned above, this essay should be thought of as a case study for a certain methodology, designed to generate interesting hypotheses and confirm the value of future research in this vein.

**Key Words:** Latin, Linguistics, Horace, Syntax, Pragmatics

### **Dedication/Appreciation**

I am very grateful to Drs. Robert Gorman and Matthew Loar, my advisers on this project, for their help and criticism.

Deviant Word Order in the *Odes* of Horace

**I. Introduction**

*I think one should write vers libre only when one ‘must’, that is to say, only when the ‘thing’ builds up a rhythm more beautiful than that of set meters, or more real, more a part of the emotion of the ‘thing’...a rhythm which discontents one with set iambic or set anapaestic. Eliot has said the thing very well when he said, ‘No vers is libre for the man who wants to do a good job.’*

--Ezra Pound, *Literary Essays*<sup>1</sup>

As I understand it, the “thing” that Eliot said was this: all poets must fashion their rhythms with attention to the informational structure of their sentences. A short article I happened upon, on the use of hyperbaton in Latin poetry, contains a strikingly similar quotation from Eliot in a context that confirms the reading. The author, while discussing “sense rhythm”—the effect created by the interaction of the meaning of the words, presented in a particular order, and the rhythm of the line—in Greek and Latin poetry, cites another comment made by T.S. Eliot on the subject of *vers libre*: “In English poetry this sense rhythm is perhaps most skillfully employed by Milton. Father Hopkins called it counterpoint, and T.S. Eliot must have had it in mind when he referred to Milton as the ‘greatest master of free verse in our language’.”<sup>2</sup>

If sentiments such as those expressed by Pound and Eliot are on the mark, then good poets generally pay close attention to the informational structure of their sentences—their pragmatics, in the terminology of linguistics. One might further suppose that this is especially true of ancient poets. Languages like Greek and Latin afford authors a remarkable power of precisely and subtly articulating the informational content of their sentences. This is a

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<sup>1</sup> Ezra Pound, *Literary Essays*, ed. T.S. Eliot (New York: New Directions, 1968), 11.

<sup>2</sup> Edward B. Stevens, “Uses of Hyperbaton in Latin Poetry”, *The Classical Weekly*, Vol. 46, No. 13/14 (1953), 200-205.

consequence of some fundamental properties of these languages. According to A.M. Devine and Laurence D. Stephens, in their book, *Latin Word Order: Structured Meaning and Information*, Latin is a discourse-configurational language. Students of Latin often say that Latin word order is “free”, but this statement is incomplete. The order of the words in a Latin sentence is not random; rather, variations in word order are conditioned primarily by the pragmatics of the sentence. Pragmatics is broadly defined as “the study of how language is used in communication”<sup>3</sup>; here, it is used to refer to the way in which the information encoded by the sentence relates to the information already presented in the discourse or narrative. Pragmatics is distinguished from syntax, which is defined as “the system of rules and categories that underlies sentence formation in human language”.<sup>4</sup> In other words, “very roughly speaking, Latin word order is grammatically free but pragmatically fixed, while English word order is pragmatically free but grammatically fixed.”<sup>5</sup>

To illustrate this idea, consider the following sentence written by the Latin poet Horace:

(1) sperat infestis, metuit secundis/alteram sortem bene praeparatum/pectus  
(Hor. *Carm.* II.x, 13-15)

This sentence is essentially two sentences, joined together in asyndeton, with the material common to both—*alteram sortem bene praeparatum pectus*—following the main verbs and the adjectives. In each sentence, the main verb has been raised from its default position at the end of the sentence to the beginning of the sentence, and the ablatives, *infestis*, and *secundis*, follow the verbs. This is because both the verbs and the ablatives are the subject of what is known as contrastive focus. The first four words encode the most significant new information in the sentence. The verbs are being contrasted with one another, and so are the ablatives. This sentence, idiomatically translated, means “The well-prepared heart, on the one hand, is hopeful

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<sup>3</sup>William O’Grady and John Archibald, *Contemporary Linguistics: An Introduction* (New York: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2010), 595.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 638.

<sup>5</sup> A.M. Devine and Laurence D. Stephens, *Latin Word Order: Structured Meaning and Information* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 26.

in hard times, and on the other hand, is uneasy in fortunate times”. Because Latin is discourse-configurational, it allows them to be moved to the beginning of the sentence and thereby emphasized. This is what discourse-configurationality means: words occupy the positions they do because of the status of the information they encode. It is arguably the most distinctive feature of languages like Latin and Greek.

Latin’s discourse-configurationality is no doubt an essential part of the unique beauty and richness of Latin literature. Devine and Stephens write: “Reading a paragraph of Latin without attention to the word order is like taking a black and white photograph. Adding in the word order is like going from black and white to full color. A whole new dimension of meaning is added...revealing a rich range of subtle interpretive nuances.”<sup>6</sup> An account of “structured meaning and information” is therefore indispensable to the study of any Latin text in which the author attempts to build up layers of subtle meaning, and uses the language with some aesthetic ends in view. Of course, this is the case for practically any text and any author, but it is especially true for poetry. It is immediately apparent that word order is a significant element in the poetics of many authors of Latin verse. Consider the following *sententia* from *Odes* III.i:

- (2) aequa lege Necessitas  
sortitur insignes et imos:  
omne capax movet urna nomen. (Hor. *Carm.* III.i., 14-16)

The final line, which is also the final sentence, features a totally symmetrical structure of the form a1a2vn1n2. The structure of this line is reminiscent of a famous line in the *Eclogues* of Vergil:<sup>7</sup>

- (3) ultima Cumaei venit iam carminis aetas (Verg. *Ecl.* IV, 4)

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>7</sup> Jesus Bermudez Ramiro, “Logica, Retorica y Estetica del Sintagma Nominal “Adjetivo-Sustantivo” en las Odas de Horacio”, *Helios* 42 (1985), pp. 122-141.

Lines with this structure were called “golden lines” by the ancients.<sup>8</sup> Here, as in the example from the *Odes*, the sense conveyed is one of finality, balance, and a grand cosmic order; this sense is reinforced, in the case of the example from the fourth Eclogue, by the line that follows it: *magnus ab integro saeculorum nascitur ordo*.<sup>9</sup> This idea is emphasized by the symmetrical, self-contained structure of the line. The same is true for *Odes* III.i. Horace uses a neat, solid structure to convey a hard and universal truth: everyone, no matter who, must face his fate on equal footing with everyone else. In addition, the fronting of the strongly focused universal quantifier adds impact to the statement that *everyone* is subject to this aspect of the human condition. In this way, Classical poets such as Horace and Vergil deliberately exploited syntactic structures in order to produce specific poetic effects.

However, although the last few decades have seen several scholars attempt a full-dress treatment of Latin word order, inspired by the powerful techniques of twentieth-century linguistics, such as generative grammar, which studies how more complex sentences are formed from simpler ones, and formalized semantics and pragmatics, these scholars have confined themselves to prose data; there has been as yet little systematic study of the word order of Latin verse. Devine and Stephens state at the outset that “the general target of [their] work is the simple sentence in classical prose (the word order of verse is clearly a separate, though not unrelated, question).”<sup>10</sup> These scholars are primarily interested in answering fundamental questions, such as whether Latin has a neutral or “unmarked” word order, or whether Latin is discourse-configurational, and in order to establish this empirically it is necessary to gather and analyze a large amount of data illustrating the relative frequencies of different serial orders in the simple sentence while holding all else constant. They therefore focus on large prose corpora such as Cicero or Caesar, where dozens of examples of stock

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>9</sup> The great line of the centuries begins anew (Verg. *Ecl.* IV, 5)

<sup>10</sup> Devine and Stephens 8.



phrases, like *castra movet*, used in various contexts, can be adduced in support of their arguments. This is generally not possible with verse (excluding epic, which is marked by the peculiarities of the oral tradition), where such phrases are few, and corpora are small. Moreover, it is assumed that verse, due to the demands of Latin's strict quantitative meter and the primarily aesthetic, rather than expository, aims of the authors, does not, generally speaking, obey the syntactic rules that these scholars seek to document. Harm Pinkster writes in *Latin Syntax and Semantics* that "in poetry...the word order is largely determined by metrical and/or aesthetic factors. This is a literary convention, which, as it were, overrides syntactic and pragmatic factors that normally determine the word order."<sup>11</sup>

The scholars of Latin who are interested in contemporary methods in linguistics have therefore avoided verse when discussing Latin word order. However, the aim of the present study is not to address fundamental questions about Latin generally, to situate it on the scale of interlinguistic variation in the values of the various parameters countenanced by universal grammar. Rather, it is precisely to begin to get an empirical handle on why, how, and how much the word order of Latin verse differs from that of Latin prose. The basic methodology of this project consists of gathering examples from poetry of the various grammatical phenomena discussed by Devine and Stephens and comparing them with these scholars' prose data in an attempt to determine empirically whether and how they systematically diverge.

The poetry of Horace is an ideal place to begin, whether one's interest is primarily literary or primarily linguistic. Out of all the Latin poets of the reign of Augustus, Horace uses the widest variety of meters, making it easier to isolate the impact of metrical constraints on structural choices within his oeuvre. In addition, contrary to what one might expect, given the notorious difficulty experienced by students when they first encounter his poetry, Horace's language, in many ways, is less "marked" stylistically than that of the other poets of his period.

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<sup>11</sup> Harm Pinkster, *Latin Syntax and Semantics* (London: Routledge, 1990), 186.

According to R.G.M. Nisbet and Margaret Hubbard, in the introduction to their commentary on the *Odes*,

[I]t is not a criticism to call Horace prosaic: more, perhaps, than any other Augustan poet he writes in Latin...[I]n general his word order is more straightforward than that of his contemporary poets. He achieves his effects largely by metrical virtuosity: the words click into place with seeming inevitability, and no rubble is needed to fill in the cracks.<sup>12</sup>

Given that Horace's poetry is more "prosaic" and more "Latin" than that of his contemporaries, studying Horace means that we can control, to some degree, for the peculiarities that might result from various stylistic affectations, and simply focus on the consequences of writing in stanzas rather than paragraphs, so to speak.

As one might guess from its relative brevity, this paper is not a full-blown treatment of word order in Latin verse; instead, it is an extended case study, or rather two, of particular grammatical phenomena in the most well-known work of a particular poet. The two grammatical phenomena discussed are clause-initial verbs and premodifier hyperbaton. Both are extremely common in Horace; in addition, they serve well to illustrate the central hypothesis, which is that, *grosso modo*, Horace's word order differs less from that of prose authors in structures that are mainly pragmatically conditioned than in those that are the result of a properly syntactic process. The discussion of the quotes from Pound and Eliot at the beginning of the paper served to lend intuitive support to this hypothesis. Devine and Stephens view verb-initial order as primarily a pragmatically conditioned phenomenon. In their analysis of a data set comprised of both initial indicatives and raised imperatives, they write:

[G]rammatical function is not the primary factor controlling the word order in these examples. *What matters is the pragmatics: if neutral order does not give acceptable pragmatics, unfocused arguments are scrambled.* (Emphasis added.)<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> R.G.M. Nisbet and Margaret Hubbard, *A Commentary on Horace: Odes, Book I* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), xxii.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 170-171.

In contrast, the authors have this to say about the conditions that license premodifier hyperbaton:

[T]here are enough instances that do not conform to the usual pragmatic structure to show that *premodifier hyperbaton is a properly syntactic process not tied to a single pragmatics*...[P]remodifier hyperbaton, like hyperbaton in general, is just partial movement. (Emphasis added.)<sup>14</sup>

For the purposes of this paper, it will be assumed that these statements are correct. The conclusion of the empirical analysis in Section II, then, will be that the generalizations extracted by Devine and Stephens from their prose data on clause-initial verbs are much more robust when applied to Horace's poetry than the ones they propose for premodifier hyperbaton, and that the rules Horace breaks are, generally speaking, not pragmatic, but properly syntactic.<sup>15</sup>

Before proceeding to the analysis, we need to address an important potential concern. One concern about this project and its methodology is whether its scope is unduly narrowed by its reliance on the theoretical framework of *LWO*. Devine and Stephens' assumption that generative grammar provides a good way of describing Latin word order, and that word order in Latin, although syntactically "free", is able to be better comprehended if we posit a neutral word order defined in syntactic terms, has received criticism from other scholars, such as Olga Spevak, who writes, in her review of *LWO*:

What is the relevance of the succession of syntactic terms in a syntactically 'free'—or better 'variable'—word order language like Latin?...The assumption of the basic order mentioned above...is closely related to what is assumed in this theoretical framework for Germanic languages, especially German and Dutch...Even if there are a few particular cases allowing another placement of constituents, these patterns are *obligatory* in German and Dutch. In Latin, however, a different order from the one supposed to be the basic order, for example verb > object > subject, *does not*

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 548.

<sup>15</sup> One way of explaining what is meant by "properly syntactic", as opposed to "pragmatic", is this: if  $\Sigma$  is the set of all "syntax-terms", that is, all the descriptive and theoretical terminology that belongs only to syntax and not to any other area of linguistics (phonology, pragmatics, etc.), and if  $\Pi$  is the set of all "pragmatics-terms", that is, all the descriptive and theoretical terminology that belongs only to pragmatics and to no other area of linguistics, a properly syntactic rule is one that can be stated using only the terms that belong to  $\Sigma$ , whereas to state a pragmatic rule requires one or more terms that belong to  $\Pi$ . Thus, for example, "A clause must contain a subject and a verb in English" is a properly syntactic rule, whereas "Direct objects may be fronted in English if they are topical" is not.

produce an ungrammatical sentence...Scrambling may be a good concept for explaining (rare) Dutch word order variations, but is it sufficient or adequate for describing variable Latin word order?<sup>16</sup>

Spevak also argues that *LWO* largely fails to take into account previous work on Latin word order and to accommodate differing theoretical perspectives:

Devine and Stephens, unfortunately, never discuss previous research on Latin word order. Therefore it is difficult for the reader to distinguish what is newly observed and what is already known in this matter...[The authors] mainly refer to studies in generative grammar or general linguistics...They often support their argumentation by referring to phenomena observed in various, usually not commonly known languages such as Dutch, Russian, Japanese, etc. Only 14% of the bibliographic items concern Latin linguistics or Latin word order. [Their] study seems to be more intended for people interested in generative grammar than for Latinists.<sup>17</sup>

I believe that Spevak's critiques of Devine and Stephens' work are certainly valid, though adjudicating as to their soundness would be beyond the scope of this paper. What does need to be said here is that I believe these points do not seriously diminish the relevance of the present project for everyone interested in Latin, or reduce it to a parochial exercise. The distinction between primarily pragmatic and properly syntactic processes, as stated above, can be formulated more precisely. In the theoretical framework of *LWO*, all variation in word order is accounted for by the concept of scrambling. The distinction, then, is between scrambling that significantly correlates with a certain pragmatics and scrambling that does not. The different pragmatic contexts discussed in *LWO* are not limited to the generative grammar framework. The argument advanced in this paper, therefore, does not depend upon Devine and Stephens' opinion as to the mechanics of the process by which various word orders are generated, but only on the uncontroversial (from a theoretical point of view) individuation of pragmatic contexts and their correlations with certain word orders, whose frequencies can be estimated independent of any background theory. I have not exactly, in defiance of the authors'

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<sup>16</sup> Olga Spevak, review of *Latin Word Order: Structured Meaning and Information*, by A.M. Devine and L.D. Stephens. *Mnemosyne*, Fourth Series, Vol. 60, Fasc. 3 (2007), 498.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 500.

recommendation, used *LWO* as a purely descriptive account of word order in Latin; I accept that this is primarily conditioned by pragmatics, and therefore have availed myself of the only comprehensive treatment of the subject in the context of modern theories of discourse, as is suggested by the subtitle of *LWO*, which is *Structured Meaning and Information*. But I have not committed myself to the authors' theoretical view of the nature of the syntactic processes that are pragmatically conditioned in this way.

## II. Verb-Initial Structures in the *Odes*

Devine and Stephens are able to discern a single consistent feature of the pragmatics of verb-initial structures in classical Latin prose: verb-initial syntax is licensed in sentences which are most naturally read as having broad scope focus, with the verb, which we might think of as “referring to” the event described by a sentence or main clause (as opposed to, e.g., a participant in this event), representing the most important information encoded by the sentence or clause.<sup>18</sup> To put it in their terminology, initial verbs are favored in sentences which take a *thetic*, as opposed to a *categorical*, perspective on the information encoded. Roughly speaking, a thetic sentence presents an event simply as an occurrence, where a categorical sentence would present the event as a “property” predicated of the agent:

The prototypical transitive sentence is grammatically encoded as a property relationship between the agent and the event...The syntactic incarnation of this perspective is the main predication between subject and verb phrase. We call such sentences ‘categorical’. Categorical sentences are distinguished from ‘thetic’ sentences. In thetic sentences the event is not seen from this perspective, but simply as an occurrence. The agent is one of the participants in the event but is not singled out as the subject of a main predication.<sup>19</sup>

To give an example: the difference between thetic and categorical is the difference between “What happened was that the cat ate the pizza” and “What the cat did was eat the pizza”. In English we convey this difference either by using different words, as in these two sentences,

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<sup>18</sup> Devine and Stephens 150.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 149.

or by adding emphasis in delivery: compare “The cat ate the pizza” and “The cat *ate the pizza*”. Latin, however, conveys this difference by putting the same words in a different order.

The obvious way to begin demonstrating that theticity favors verb-initial syntax is to gather examples of initial verbs and attempt to show that most or all of the sentences in which they appear can be read naturally as thetic. One should then, conversely, attempt to establish statistically that the types of verbs for which a thetic perspective is easiest appear more frequently than other types of verbs in initial position. This is how the authors of *LWO* proceed for the prose data with which they concern themselves, and it is how we will proceed as well.

Devine and Stephens have identified the following categories of sentences, listed below with brief explanations, where necessary, and examples from Horace, which lend themselves naturally to a thetic perspective and for which verb-initial syntax is common:

- a) IMPERATIVE SENTENCES
- b) SENTENCES WITH UNACCUSATIVE MAIN VERBS (e.g., existential and presentational sentences)
- c) PASSIVE SENTENCES
- d) SENTENCES WITH POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE POLARITY FOCUS (sentences that say either that something *did* happen while excluding the possibility that it did not happen, or vice versa)
- e) SENTENCES THAT FUNCTION AS ARGUMENTS OF DISCOURSE COHESION OPERATORS (e.g., sentences expressing consequences of previous events or successive events in a sequence)
- f) SENTENCES WITH “PSYCH” MAIN VERBS (e.g., verbs of fearing, wishing, liking)

The first three classes of sentences in this list are distinguished by a “less complex event structure that favors a thetic perspective”<sup>20</sup>: fewer participants means fewer things to focus on other than just the fact that the event took place. The authors illustrate this idea with the

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 151.

following example, which features an unaccusative and a transitive verb that are close in meaning:

Consider the Latin verbs *madefacio* ‘make wet’ and *madesco* ‘become wet’. *Madefacio* is a transitive verb; its decompositional semantics, as its etymology indicates, is roughly as follows:...[*x* ACT-ON *y* CAUSE BECOME *y* wet]. *Madesco*, on the other hand...lacks the whole top layer of the decompositional structure assigned to *madefacio*. All that *madesco* tells us is that a substance *y* changes from a pre-existing dry state into a consequent wet state, in symbols [BECOME *y* wet].<sup>21</sup>

Likewise, imperatives often have null subjects, which means that “[t]he agent does not need to be separately established, and the speaker can be [more interested] in the simple occurrence of the event”.<sup>22</sup> And passivization, as we learn from transformational grammar, reduces the valency (number of obligatory arguments) of the verb by transforming the agent from a subject into an adjunct.

The other types of sentences lend themselves to a thetic perspective because of the information they convey. When someone utters a sentence with positive polarity focus, for instance, he or she is not interested in establishing that a certain person did this or that, but simply that it did, in fact, happen. Likewise, when narrating a sequence of events or describing the consequences of an event, the author is usually just interested in saying what happened. It is a little less clear why sentences with psych verbs favor a thetic perspective. Devine and Stephens note that psychological state sentences are usually tightly connected to the surrounding context, since “[p]sychological states typically arise as a consequence of some anterior event” and “typically set the stage for some subsequent event”<sup>23</sup>; thus, it is possible that they invite a thetic perspective for the same reason that sentences in sequential narration or sentences describing consequences do.

Verb-initial syntax is relatively common in Latin, and it is common in Horace as well. The first two books of the *Odes*, for example, contain no fewer than 78 sentence-initial verbs.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 156.

The rate of occurrence of non-final verbs in general is vastly higher for poetry than for prose. Stevens remarks that “[i]n Horace’s *Odes*...the verb is final in only 25% of all sentences. Samples from the *Aeneid* and the *De Rerum Natura* indicate that about a third of Vergil’s verbs are final and about half of those of Lucretius”<sup>24</sup>, whereas “the verb is final in 80% of all sentences from Cato to Sallust. From Caesar to Livy the figure is 70%.”<sup>25</sup> Incidentally, this supports the argument of Devine and Stephens that verb-initial orders are “semantically and syntactically more complex than neutral orders”, that is, that they are “derived by verb movement from the neutral order”<sup>26</sup>; it is reasonable to think that more complex orders are employed more frequently in poetry than in prose.

It can immediately be seen that a significant number of Horace’s initial verbs occur in unambiguouslythetic sentence. *Odes* I and II feature in initial position 19 imperatives, 15 passive or unaccusative verbs, 15 psych verbs, and 6 verbs in yes/no questions; thus, approximately 70% of the initial verbs in these books appear in types ofthetic sentences that require little or no subjective judgment to identify.

Unproblematic examples of initial imperatives in the *Odes* include the following:

- (4) *dissolve* frigus ligna super foco/large reponens (I.viii)  
*permitte* divis cetera, qui simul/stravere ventos aequore  
 fervido/deproeliantes (I.viii)  
*mitte* sectari, rosa quo locorum sera moretur (I. xxxviii)  
*compesce* clamorem ac sepulcri/mitte supervacuos honores (II.xx)

Contrast these examples, in which the imperatives have null subjects, and the three examples in (5), in which the subject is addressed by name in apostrophe (and therefore does not have its normal argument status) and the verb comes first in the clause,

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<sup>24</sup> Stevens 202.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Devine and Stephens 167. The question that the authors of *LWO* are attempting to answer in the section cited here is whether verb-final orders are derived from verb-initial orders, with the latter being the basic order, or the other way around, as they conclude.



- (5) *praecipe* lugubres/cantus, Melpomene (I.xxiv)  
 apricos necte flores,/necte meo Lamiae coronam,/Pimplei dulcis (I.xxvi)  
*age dic* Latinum,/barbite, carmen (I.xxxii),

with those in (6), in which the imperative is preceded by the overt pronominal subject

- (6) tu *ne quaesieris*—scire nefas—quem mihi, quem tibi/finem di dederint,  
 Leuconoë (I.xi)  
 ...tuque testudo resonare septem/callida nervis, nec loquax olim neque  
 grata, nunc et/divitum mensis et amica templis,/dic modos, Lyde quibus  
 obstinatas/applicet aures (III.xi)  
 vos, o pueri et puellae/non virum expertae, maleominatis/*parcite* verbis  
 (III.xiv)

Initial position for imperatives and independent subjunctives is, of course, not obligatory in any case, as the following examples without the pronominal subject show:

- (7) Faune, Nympharum fugientum amator,/per meos fines et aprica rura/lenis  
 incedas *abeasque* parvis/aequus alumnis (III.xviii)  
 o Venus, regina Cnidi Paphique,/sperne dilectam Cypron (I.xxx)

However, as is the case for prose, raised imperatives are much more common in Horace in commands when there is no overt pronominal subject. This is what we would expect, given our assumption that imperatives favor a thetic perspective because they often have a less complex event structure. Observe also that in the last two examples in (6), and especially in the second example, the imperative does not raise despite the significant amount of material that goes before it.

Passives are also well-represented in initial position in the sample:

- (8) *solvitur* acris hiems grata vice veris et Favoni (I.iv)  
*scriberis* Vario fortis et hostium/victor Maenoi carminis alite (I.vi)  
*truditur* dies die,/novaeque pergunt interire lunae (II.xviii)  
*pellitur* paternos/in sinu ferens deos/et uxor et vir (II.xviii)  
*vivitur* parvo bene, cui paternum/splendet in mensa tenui salinum (II.xvi)  
*nascunturque* leves/per digitos umerosque plumae (II.xx),

as are existential-appearance verbs and other unaccusative verbs

- (9) *sunt* quibus unum opus est, intactae Palladis urbem/carmine perpetuo celebrare  
 (I.vii)

*sunt* quos curriculo pulverem Olympicum/collegisse iuvat (I.i)  
*est* qui nec veteris pocula Massici/nec partem solido demere de die/spernit (I.i)  
*manet* sub Iove frigido/venator tenerae coniugis immemor (I.i)  
*seu visa est* catulis cerva fidelibus (I.i)  
*fertur* Prometheus addere principi/limo coactus particulam (I.xvi)  
 quorum simul alba nautis/stella refulsit,/defluit saxis agitatus umor (I.xii)  
*crescit* occulto velut arbor aevo fama Marcelli (I.xii)  
*stat* glacies iners/menses per omnes (II.ix)  
*et incedis* per ignes/suppositos cineri doloso (II.i),

as well as psych verbs

- (10) *terrui* gentis, grave ne rediret/saeculum Pyrrhae nova monstra questae (I.ii)  
*urit* me Glyceræ nitor,/splendentis Pario marmore purius (I.xix)  
*amatque*/ianua limen,/quæ prius multum facilis movebat/cardines (I.xxv)  
*displicent* nexæ philyra coronæ (I.xxxviii)  
*movit* Aiacem Telamone natum/forma captivæ dominum Tecmessæ (II.iv)  
*dissipat* Euius/curas edaces (II.xi)

and verbs with some kind of polarity focus (negative, positive, or interrogative):

- (11) *vides* ut alta stet nive candidum/Soracte? (I.viii)  
*neglegis* immeritis nocituram/postmodo te natis fraudem committere? (I.xxviii-2)  
*nec viget* quicquam simile aut secundum/proximos illi tamen occupavit/Pallas honores (I.xii)  
*nec timuit* præcipitem Africum/decertantem Aquilonibus (I.iii)  
*nec patitur* Scythas/et versis animosum equis/Parthum dicere (I.xix)  
*nescias* an te generum beati/Phyllidis flavæ decorent parentes (II.iv)  
*audivere*, Lycea, di mea vota, di/me audivere (IV.viii)  
*enitescis*/pulchrior multo iuvenumque prodis publica cura. (II.viii)  
*ibimus, ibimus*,/utcumque præcedes, supremum/carpere iter comites parati (II.xvii).

However, in attempting to establish empirically the converse of this conclusion—that imperatives, passives, unaccusatives, and psych verbs are more likely than other verbs to occupy the leftmost position in the clause—we can expect to run into the data sparsity problem. The authors of *LWO* establish, for example, the relevance of passivity to verb position by comparing the frequency of active *mittit* and passive *mittitur*, *mittuntur* in the historians (Caesar, Sallust, Livy); they discovered that “4.73% of the instances of *mittit* were sentence initial (T=127), while 46.67% of the passives *mittitur*, *mittuntur* were sentence initial (T=15);

so the passive was ten times as likely to be in sentence initial position as the active in this test”.<sup>27</sup> Carrying out the same test with an equally restricted data set is basically impossible for poetry. While acknowledging that the resulting evidence will not be as strong, we can attempt a similar test with the restrictions on the data set loosened considerably. Intuitively, since data sparsity prevents us from isolating a single usage of a particular verb (e.g. *movere* with *castra*), it seems best to select, as Devine and Stephens do for their passivity test, a common verb with a flexible meaning (since a verb with a more narrowly delimited meaning could conceivably possess some particular semantic feature that favored a thetic perspective and thereby confound the data). Therefore, I used *fero* and its immediate etymological relatives, in all tenses and numbers, and grouped the examples into imperatives and passives on the one hand, and actives on the other hand. I found that none of the 27 active instances of these verbs was sentence initial, while three of the 11 passive or imperative instances were sentence initial (27.28%). Although one would ideally like a larger and tidier data set, this test, and particularly the lack of any sentence-initial active instances of *fero* and related verbs, does plausibly suggest that passive voice and imperative mood are for Horace, as for prose authors, factors that tend to produce verb-initial syntax. I carried out a similar test for the *prima facie* relevance of psych verb status to initial position, tabulating all active instances of *moveo* and its immediate etymological relatives, and all instances of those “verbs of temperature increase”, for lack of a better term, which Horace applies metaphorically to psychological states. None of the 9 instances of non-psych *moveo* was sentence initial. One of the 3 instances of psych *moveo* was sentence initial, and it occurred in the following asyndetic structure:

- (12) *movit* Aiace[m] Telamone natum/forma captivae dominum Tecmessae;/arsit  
Atrides medio in triumpho/virgine rapta (II.iv).

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<sup>27</sup> Devine and Stephens 154.

Horace is quite fond of this type of structure, more often than not beginning each constituent of the asyndeton with the same verb, as in the examples in (14) below. These data are slightly problematic; because, in most of the examples, we find the pattern of alternating lines beginning with the same verb, they will require a compelling analysis in order to demonstrate that the initial position of the verbs is not due solely to metrical and aesthetic factors. Such an analysis will be pursued below; for now, because the only example of psych *moveo* is also an example of this special structure, we will pass over it. The data for “verbs of temperature increase” are somewhat more satisfactory: none of the 3 instances of non-psych *uro* and *aestuo* was sentence initial, while 5 of the 10 instances of psych *uro*, *ardeo*, *caleo*, *ferveo*, *torreo*, and *tepeo* were sentence initial (50%).

All of these statistical tabulations are admittedly less than ideal in comparison with those made for prose corpora in works such as *LWO*, but they are enough to go on. On the basis of the above analyses, we can say that the generalizations *vis-à-vis* initial position made by Devine and Stephens for imperatives, unaccusatives, passives, and psych verbs appear to hold good in Horace. It remains to consider the rest of the examples in our sample from the first two books of the *Odes*, which, unlike those considered so far, require some subjective judgment to identify as thetic. Before continuing, however, let me say that I am aware that it may be objected to the analysis presented in this paper that the genuine hypothesis that Horace’s poetry generally obeys pragmatic rules is inherently more difficult to falsify than the null hypothesis that it does not generally obey properly syntactic ones. This objection would be especially hard to dispatch if we simply took every example individually and attempted to tell a plausible pragmatic story about why the verb is in initial position.

However, when I examine the remaining initial verbs in my sample from *Odes* I and II, I noticed a striking commonality that makes the idea that verb-initial order in Horace is associated with a certain pragmatics much more compelling. The poems in the *Odes* that deal

with themes such as mortality and resignation to the cosmic order furnish an unusual number of examples of verb-initial syntax. There is a reason for this. Horace is fond of framing his poems in general, including his meditations on, for instance, death, as apostrophes to specific people. In discussing this fact, Nisbet and Hubbard note that

As Horace's odes profess to be directed at somebody, they naturally use the techniques of rhetoric... The common experience of humanity is crystallized in *sententiae* that aim at novelty of expression rather than of thought. Dogmatic assertions are given plausibility by conventional *exempla* from mythology or nature.<sup>28</sup>

Verb-initial syntax is strikingly common in these “*exempla*”:

- (13) *fugit* retro/levis iuventas et decor (II.xi)  
*absumet* heres Caecuba dignior/servata centum clavibus (II.xiv)  
*abstulit* clarum cita mors Achillem (II.xvi)  
*monet* Sithoniis non levis Euhius (I.xix)  
*occidit* et Pelopis genitor, conviva deorum (I.xxviii)  
*habentque*/Tartara Panthoiden iterum Orco/dimissum, (I.xxviii)  
*vivet* extento Proculeius aevo,/notus in fratres animi paterni (II.ii)  
*valet* ima summis/mutare (I.xxxiv)  
*diffugiunt* cadis/cum faece siccatis amici (I.xxxv)  
*expertus* vacuum Daedalus aëra/pinnis non homini datis (I.iv)  
*perrupit* Acheronta Herculeus labor (I.iv)

The point of each of these sentences is that, contrary to what one might have hoped for oneself, or what one might have expected given the fame and valor of a certain hero, or despite whatever efforts one may have made to stave it off, age, death, time, and the will of the gods are irresistible and come for us all in the end. For instance, in the third example, in its context in *Odes* II.xiv, Horace is telling Postumus that he should not expect to live forever, since even the famous Achilles succumbed to death. Likewise, in the fifth example, it is clear even without context, thanks to the explicit *et*, that Horace, addressing the already dead Archytas, is reminding him that although the father of Pelops was once welcome at the banquet of the gods, and although the son of Panthous did not go gently into his good night, carrying his shield from the Trojan war, both were doomed to die, as was Archytas himself. The example from I.xxxv,

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<sup>28</sup> Nisbet and Hubbard xxv.

an ode on Fortuna, is preceded immediately by the mention of the rituals with which the priests of Rome placate the goddess, and the message is that these rites avail but little. Finally, the last two examples, which occur consecutively in the poem, serve to illustrate Horace's general comment on human arrogance.

In the terminology of *LWO*, these sentences exhibit positive polarity focus. With these *exempla*, Horace is emphasizing to his addressee that despite what he or she might hope or expect, x will happen to him or her because y happened to z. I therefore assert that the informational structure of these sentences is no different from that of the "straightforward" examples of positive or negative polarity focus in (4) above. This analysis suggests an account of asyndetic structures such as the following, of which Horace is also particularly fond:

- (14) *audiet* civis acuisse ferrum,/quo graves Persae melius perirent;/*audiet* pugnas  
vitio parentum/rara iuventus (I.ii).  
*cedes* coemptis saltibus et domo/villaque, flavus quam Tiberis lavit;/*cedes*, et  
exstructis in altum/divitiis potietur heres (II.iii)  
*ridet* hoc, inquam, Venus ipsa; *ridet*/simplices Nymphae ferus et Cupido (II.viii)  
*urit* me Glycerae nitor,/splendentis Pario marmore purius;/*urit* grata protervitas/et  
vultus nimium libricus aspici (I.xix)

Given what has just been said, one's first suspicion might be that this construction usually involves two or more illustrations of a general principle, like the ones in (13), joined together, but only the third example in (14) could possibly be interpreted in this way. Instead, it appears that the structure attested in (14) is simply used to encode a generic positive polarity focus. Devine and Stephens cite the following sentence of Cicero as an example of positive polarity focus encoded by emphatic repetition of the initial verb:

- (15) *erit, erit* illud profecto tempus et illucescet ille aliquando dies (Cic. Pro Mil. 69)

The last example in (11) above shows that Horace, as well, repeats an initial verb when he wants to emphasize that something *will* take place. It is plausible to think that in the examples in (14), the repetition of the verb in two clauses in asyndeton, in initial position in each, serves

the same purpose, especially when we look at the first and second examples. In the first example *pugnas* is tail material, that is, it is readily inferred from the information in the preceding clause; in the second example *cedes* is without arguments or adjuncts when it appears the second time. Therefore, the only difference between these sentences and the last example in (11), in terms of informational structure, is the fact that the second occurrence of the verb is extracted from the entire clause and stands on its own. Of course, it would also be plausible to think, for the very same reason, that this sort of asyndetic construction is used chiefly to fit the meter (since an eminently metrically tractable verb reappears conveniently where it isn't strictly needed), were it not for the fact that the examples of this construction, including the third and fourth, where the second occurrence of the verb is followed by new information, clearly do seem to encode positive polarity focus in the contexts in which they appear in the poems. The second example in (14) is used to make the same point as the sentences in (13). The third example in (14) occurs immediately after the following sentence in (II.viii), which plainly has positive polarity focus:

- (16) *expedit* matris cineres opertos/fallere et toto taciturna noctis/signa cum  
caelo gelidaque divos/morte carentes (II.viii)

Horace's point is that Barine, despite her many transgressions, broken promises and false oaths, only gains in beauty. Moreover, *inquam* strengthens the assertion. Finally, note that *ridet* occurs at the end, not the beginning, of its line. In (I.xix), he says that he is tormented by Glycera's beauty just after stating that he had thought he would never have another crush. For the example from (I.ii), the reading in context is a little less obvious. Actually, it is tempting to read *audiet* as contrastively focused, along with *vidimus* two stanzas before, or as under the scope of a consequentiality operator; this does not explain the repetition of the verb, however. In any case, this example demonstrates the subtle nuances of interpretation that can be revealed by this sort of precise linguistic analysis.

Sentences involving positive polarity focus in fact account for a quite substantial proportion of our sample from *Odes* I and II. Most of the remaining verb-initial structures in the sample seem to be straightforwardly accounted for by intersentential relations of consequentiality or sequentiality

- (17) sed tu simul obligasti/perfidum votis caput, *enitescis*/pulchrior multo  
iuvenumque prodis publica cura (II.viii)  
ne male dispari/incontinentes iniciat manus/et *scindat* haerentem  
coronam/crinibus immeritamque vestem (I.xvii)  
quorum simul alba nautis/stella refulsit,/defluit saxis agitatus umor (I.xii),

by the heaviness of their complements

- (18) *audis* minus et minus iam:/ “me tuo longas pereunte noctes,/Lydia,  
dormis?” (I.xxv)  
*nescias* an te generum beati/Phyllidis flavae decorent parentes (II.iv)  
*nolis* longa ferae bella Numantiae/nec durum Hannibalem nec Siculum  
mare/Poeni purpureum sanguine mollibus/aptari citharae modis (II.xii),

or by multiple contrastive focus, with the main focus on the verb and subordinate focus on one or more other constituents

- (19) *sperat* infestis, *metuit* secundis/alteram sortem bene  
praeparatum/pectus (II.x)  
seu *rupit* teretes Marsus aper plagas (I.i)  
*amatque*/ianua limen,/quae prius multum facilis movebat/cardines (I.xxv)  
*manet* sub Iove frigido/venator tenerae coniugis immemor (I.i)  
*laudabunt* alii claram Rhodon aut Mytilenen (I.vii)  
*dant* alios Furiae torvo spectacula Marti (I.xxviii).

As I stated earlier, I am aware that the hypothesis I am making regarding the pragmatics of Horace’s odes is more difficult to falsify than the corresponding null hypothesis regarding their syntax. However, I believe that the evidence presented in this section is quite strong, certainly strong enough to show that the hypothesis is viable.

### III. Premodifier Hyperbaton in the *Odes*

Premodifier hyperbaton, according to Devine and Stephens, is a properly syntactic phenomenon. This means that, while we can make some rough generalizations about the



pragmatic values of adjectives and nouns, there are non-pragmatic factors that influence word order in premodifier hyperbaton. I will first demonstrate that these rough pragmatic generalizations, such as they are, by and large hold true for the *Odes*; Then I will discuss uses of premodifier hyperbaton by Horace that violate rules of prose word order that belong to syntax proper.

Fortunately, Horace, like other Classical poets, is extremely fond of premodifier hyperbaton. For instance, there are no fewer than 72 instances of premodifier hyperbaton in the first 10 poems in *Odes* I alone, and 97 instances in the first 10 poems in *Odes* III, the majority of which are unambiguous examples of pragmatic categories which the authors of *LWO* argue favor premodifier hyperbaton:

(20) COMPARATIVES/SUPERLATIVES

piscium et *summa* genus haesit *ulmo* (I.ii)  
 nunc et latentis proditor *intumo*/gratus puellae risus ab *angulo* (I.ix)  
 hic *generosior* descendat in Campum *petitor* (III.i)  
 nec purpurarum sidere *clarior*/delenit *usus* (III.i)  
 horrenda late nomen in *ultimas*...extendat *oras* (III.iii)  
 mox *iuniores* quaerit *adulteros*/inter mariti vina (III.vi)

(21) QUANTIFIERS

*omne* cum Proteus *pecus* egit *altos*/visere *montes* (I.ii)  
 quis *multa* gracilis te puer in *rosa*/perfusus liquidis urget odoribus (I.iv)  
 procul *omnis* esto/*clamor* et *ira* (III.vii)  
 per *omnes*/te deos *oro* (I.viii)  
 di *multa* neglecti dederunt/Hesperiae *mala* luctuosae (III.vi)  
*omne* *capax* movet *urna* *nomen* (III.i)  
 noctes non sine *multis*/insomnis *lacrimis* agit (III.vii)

(22) CARDINAL NUMBERS

si *mobilium* turba *Quiritium*/certat *tergeminis* tollere *honoribus* (I.i)  
 temptat *mille* vafer *modis* (III.vii)  
*amatorem* *trecentae*/Pirithoum cohibent *catenae* (III.iv)

(23) ADJECTIVES OF EVALUATION

si tamen *impiae*/non *tangenda* rates transiliunt *vada* (I.iii)  
 dum *graves* Cyclopum/Volcanus ardens visit *officinas* (I.iv)  
 nec *gravem*/Pelidae *stomachum* cedere nescii (I.vi)

*certus enim promisit Apollo* (I.vii)  
*et iniqua Troiae/castra fefellit* (I.x)  
*tu pias laetis animas reponis/sedibus* (I.x)  
*praesens divus habebitur Augustus* (III.v)  
*Virtus...intaminatis fulget honoribus* (III.ii)  
*angustam amice pauperiem pati* (III.ii)  
*notus et integrae/temptator Orion Dianae* (III.iv)  
*videor pios errare per lucos* (III.iv)  
*perniciem veniens in aevium* (III.v)  
*erit ille fortis/qui perfidis se credidit hostibus* (III.v)  
*damnosa quid non imminuit dies?* (III.iv)  
*improbo iracundior Hadria* (III.ix)  
*ingratam Veneri pone superbiam* (III.x)

#### (24) ADJECTIVES OF MEASURE

*heu nimis longo satiate ludo* (I.ii)  
*hic magnos potius triumphos...ames* (I.ii)  
*qui nec veteres pocula Massici* (I.i)  
*et nova februm/terris incubuit cohors* (I.iii)  
*cras ingens iterabimus aequor* (I.vii)  
*vides ut alta stet nive candidum/Soracte* (I.ix)  
*omne capax movet urna nomen* (III.i)  
*huc frequens/caementa demittit redemptor* (III.i)  
*si pugnat extricare densis/cerva plagis* (III.v)  
*magnum illa terrorem intulerat Iovi...iuventus* (III.iv)  
*quicumque celsae nidum Acherontiae* (III.iv)  
*dic age tibia/regina longum Calliope melos* (III.iv)

#### (25) PRONOMINAL ADJECTIVES

*Gratiae decentes/alterno terram quatunt pede* (I.iv)  
*ambiguam tellure nova Salamina futuram* (I.vii)  
*vetabo...sub isdem sit trabibus* (III.ii)  
*non his iuventus orta parentibus/infecit aequor sanguine Punico* (III.vi)  
*non hoc semper erit liminis aut aquae caelestis patiens latus* (III.x)

#### (26) POSSESSIVES

*si proprio condidit horreo,/quicquid de Libycis verritur areis* (I.i)  
*neque/per nostrum patimur scelus/iracunda Iovem ponere fulmina* (I.iii)  
*nostrisque ductum seditionibus/bellum residit* (III.iii)  
*vestris amicum fontibus et choris* (III.iv)  
*testis mearum centimanus Gyas/sententiarum* (III.iv)  
*miseram tuis/dicens ignibus uri* (III.vii)

## (27) CONTRASTIVELY FOCUSED ADJECTIVES

gaudentem *patrios* findere sarculo/*agros* (I.i)  
 me *doctarum* hederæ præmia *frontium*/dis miscent superis (I.i)  
 quid si *prisca* redit *Venus* (III.ix)  
 sed *rusticorum* *mascula* *militum*/*proles* (III.vi)  
*Martiis* caelebs quid agam *Kalendis* (III.viii)  
 dona *praesentis* cape laetus *horæ* (III.viii)

In these examples, the premodifiers, for the most part, have focus. According to Devine and Stephens, this is because the semantic categories to which these adjectives belong intrinsically attract focus:

Ordinals pick out one member of a set as contrasted with the other members on the basis of rank order. Comparatives and superlatives pick out members of a set that are higher on a scale of comparison. Demonstratives pick out a referent on the basis of deixis or anaphora...Quantifiers and adjectives of measure and evaluation tend to come in antonymous pairs of polar opposites on a scale...so that the intrinsic contrast easily attracts focus. Other adjectives are restrictive in a more neutral way, that is they do not tend so strongly to evoke and exclude antonymous properties. But by virtue of being restrictive they can easily become contextually contrastive.<sup>29</sup>

There is one problem, however. The authors of *LWO* write that “descriptively used adjectives do not normally appear in premodifier hyperbaton [in Caesar and Cicero]”.<sup>30</sup> Descriptively used adjectives are used “not to restrict reference but to predicate an additional property of an independently established referent. This property is not necessarily informationally vacuous...for instance, it could serve to highlight a contextually relevant property of the modifiee...[but they] cannot be focused (in the technical sense)”.<sup>31</sup> In contrast, Horace appears to frequently make descriptively used premodifiers discontinuous from their nouns. Consider the following examples from *Odes* I, all of which contain color words:

(28) nunc *viridi* membra sub *arbuto*/stratus (I.i)  
 nec prata *canis* albicant *pruinis* (I.iv)  
 nunc decet aut *viridi* nitidum caput impedire *myrto*/aut flore (I.iv)

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<sup>29</sup> Devine and Stephens 544.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 545.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

cui *flavam* religas *comam*,/simplex munditiis? (I.v)  
 et aspera/*nigris* aequora *ventis*/emirabatur insolens (I.v)  
*albus* ut *obscuro* deterget nubila *caelo*/saepe *Notus* (I.vii)  
 neque iam *livida* gestat armis/*bracchia* (I.viii),

or these, which feature adjectives denoting other physical properties:

(29) nunc et in *umbrosis* Fauno decet immolare *lucis* (I.iv)  
 me tabula sacer/votiva paries indicat *uvida*/suspendisse *potenti*/*vestimenta* maris *deo*  
 (I.vi)  
 et *uda*/mobilibus *pomaria* rivis (I.vii)  
 seu *densa* tenebit Tiburis *umbra* tui (I.vii)  
 tempora *populea* fertur vinxisse *corona* (I.vii)  
 cur *apricum* oderit *campum* (I.viii).

As you might have guessed, I believe there is more to be said about these examples. Intuitively, there seems to be a subtle difference in the way descriptive adjectives are generally used in poetry and prose, in Latin or any other language. Consider the following three sentences of English. The first is an English translation of a sentence that could easily have been, but to my knowledge was not actually, written by Caesar; the second and third are fluent renditions of the sentences from which the first and third examples in (29) above are taken:

Caesar ordered scouts to search for enemy stragglers in the green forest nearby.

There's many a man who does not scorn cups of aged Massic or a brief rest stolen from a busy day, having stretched his limbs now beneath a green arbute-tree, now by the gentle source of a sacred stream.

Now is the time to bind your shining head with green myrtle, or the blossom that the earth, released, brings forth; now is the time to sacrifice to Faunus in shady groves, whether he should demand a lamb or prefer a kid.

What exactly is this difference? Descriptively used adjectives in poetry seem to come standard with a positive or negative connotation, whereas in prose they are normally just bare descriptors. The second English sentence seems to say that, insofar as the arbute-tree is green, it is pleasant to lie under; likewise, the third seems to be saying that, insofar as the myrtle is green, it will make a nice garland for your head. Horace's uses of adjectives like *viridis*, *lenis*, *umbrosus*, *populeus*, or *apricus*, seem to carry positive connotations in context; one feels that

the imagery would be impoverished, but the sense not catastrophically altered, if he were to have written instead *amoenus*, *pulcher*, *saluber*, or *nobilis*. The same cannot be said of the use of *viridis* in the original Latin of our imaginary sentence of Caesar, which simply supplies additional information about the forest into which the scouts were sent.

The idea, then, is that descriptively used adjectives in poetry, because they normally carry some positive or negative connotation, can attract focus for the same reason that adjectives of evaluation can attract focus. Thus, it would appear that the pragmatics of premodifier hyperbaton in Horace is the same as in prose authors, and that many adjectives used by Horace acquire an extra shade of meaning in context. There does not seem to be anything *prima facie* unpalatable about such a view. No one would define the category of adjectives of evaluation for prose to include only *bonus*, *malus*, *probus*, *improbus*, etc. We are already quite comfortable with the idea of adjectives taking on evaluative connotations in context and therefore being licensed in premodifier hyperbaton; all that is being suggested here is that, in lyric poetry, the set of such adjectives is considerably larger than in prose.

Let us now turn to the syntax of premodifier hyperbaton. The authors of *LWO* posit four basic structures for premodifier hyperbaton, asserting that “the attested orders can be seen as variants of one of these four structures”.<sup>32</sup> In the schemata below, each of which is accompanied by examples attesting this structure in the *Odes*, Y1 stands for the premodifier, Y2 stands for the noun, V stands for the verb, and Z and W stand for one or more other constituents.

(30) Y1:V:Y2

neque *tumultuosum* sollicitat *mare* (III.i)

mire *sagaces* falleret *hospites*/discrimen *obscurum* (II.v)

imbres/quem super *notas* aluere *ripas* (IV.ii)

o, qua sol *habitabiles*/inlustrat *oras*, maxime principium (IV.xiv)

(31) Y1:Z:V:Y2

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<sup>32</sup> Devine and Stephens 548.

iam *Cytherea* choros ducit *Venus* (I.iv)  
*ingratam* *Veneri* pone *superbiam* (III.x)  
 si *priores* *Maeonius* tenet/*sedes* *Homerus* (IV.ix)  
 huc *frequens*/*caementa* demittit *redemptor* (III.i)

(32) Y1:Z:Y2:V  
 si *mobilium* turba *Quiritium*/certat (I.i)  
 et *iniqua* *Troiae castra* fefellit (I.ix)  
 et *exstructis* in altum/*divitiis* potietur heres (II.iii)  
 frigidas/noctes non sine *multis*/*insomnis lacrimis* agit (III.vii)

(33) Y1:Z:Y2:W:V  
 me *doctarum* *hederae* praemia *frontium*/dis miscent *superis* (I.i)  
 somnus *agrestium*/lenis *virorum* non humiles domos/fastidit (III.i)  
 sed *bellicosus* fata *Quiritibus*/hac lege dico (III.iii)  
 qui *domita* nomen ab *Africa*/lucratus rediit (IV.viii)

In the first structure, the verb is simply flanked by the nominal elements. In the second structure, a subject or some other constituent intervenes between the premodifier and the verb. In the third structure, the verb occupies the final position in the string and some constituent intervenes between the premodifier and the noun. In the fourth structure, an additional constituent intervenes between the noun and the verb.

For the purposes of our argument, we are going to focus on the verb-medial structures: those exemplified in (30) and (31). Devine and Stephens account for the variation in the position of Y1 in the verb-medial structures by arguing that “the semantic scope of Y1 determines how much material it c-commands in the syntax”.<sup>33</sup> Thus, compare, for instance, the second example from (13) and the first example from (26):

si *proprio* condidit *horreo*, quicquid de *Libycis* verritur *areis*  
*ingratam* *Veneri* pone *superbiam*

*Veneri* is a complement of *ingratam*; it therefore falls within the semantic scope of the premodifier Y1, and, as predicted by Devine and Stephens, is c-commanded by Y1 in the syntax. On the other hand, *quicquid...areis* is a relative clause, and therefore is outside the semantic scope of Y1; likewise, it is not c-commanded by Y1 in the syntax.

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 558.

If Y1 c-commands only the material in the sentence that falls within its semantic scope, then we should not expect to find left adjunct material—ablative absolutes, participial phrases, relative clauses, adjunct nominals, and the like—c-commanded by Y1. However, there are numerous sentences in the *Odes* that do feature left adjunct material c-commanded by Y1 in verb-medial constructions. Here are four examples with ablative absolutes c-commanded by Y1:

- (34) *quisquis ingentes oculo retorto/spectat acervos* (II.ii)  
*vagus et sinistra/labitur ripa, Iove non probante, uxorius amnis* (I.ii)  
*vernique iam nimbis remotis/insolitos docuere nisus/venti paventem* (IV.iv)  
*et superiecto pavidae natarunt/aequore dammae* (I.ii)

In each of the sentences in (34), either the entire ablative absolute or the nominal head of the participial phrase is c-commanded by Y1. The following examples feature other participial phrases partly c-commanded of the premodifier:

- (35) *sed me per hostes Mercurius celer/denso paventem sustulit aëre* (II.x)  
*di multa neglecti dederunt/Hesperiae mala luctuosae* (III.vi)  
*me tamen asperas/porrectum ante fores obicere incolis/plorares Aquilonibus* (III.x)  
*quo nemus/inter pulchra satum tecta remugiat/ventis* (III.x)

Interestingly, in each of the examples in (35), the nominal head is extracted from inside the scope of Y1 and the participle is stranded, as opposed to the final example in (36). Finally, there are many instances of adjunct nominals within the scope of the premodifier, mostly prepositional phrases

- (36) *aequam memento rebus in arduis/servare mentem* (II.iii)  
*nunc in udo/ludere cum vitulis salicto/praegestientis* (II.iv)  
*cui paternum/splendet in mensa tenui salinum* (II.xvi)  
*nullam, Vare, sacra vite prius severis arborem* (I.xviii)  
*fragilemque mecum/solvat phaselon* (III.ii)  
*dum longus inter saeviat Ilion/Romamque pontus* (III.iii)  
*neque aureum/mea renidet in domo lacunar* (II.xviii)

but also bare ablatives, referring to instruments, times-at-which, locations, etc.,

- (37) *albus ut obscuro deterget nubila caelo/saepe Notus* (I.vii)  
*te pauper ambit sollicita prece/ruris colonus* (I.xxxv)  
*nec latentis/classe cita reparavit oras* (I.xxxvii)  
*patrios findere sarculo/agros* (I.i)

*illic plurima naribus/dices tura* (IV.i)  
*prius insolentem/serva Briseis niveo colore/movit Achillem* (II.iv).

The data given above demonstrate pretty clearly that the rule relating the semantic scope of Y1 to its syntactic scope posited by Devine and Stephens does not apply to the poetic style of Horace.

We also find that, unlike in prose, relative pronouns are not obligatorily extracted from inside the scope of Y1 when Y1 is scrambled, as the following examples demonstrate:

(38) *o diva, gratum quae regis Antium* (I.xxxv)  
*Sabinum...Graeca quod ego ipse testa/conditum levi* (I.xx)  
*Troica quem peperit sacerdos* (III.iii)  
*amoenae quos et aquae subeunt et aerae* (III.iv)  
*monet annus et almus/quae rapit hora diem* (IV.vii)  
*cuncta...amico/quae dederis animo* (IV.vii)

Note that all but the second example (and, in the case of one of the Y2s, the fourth example) are verb-medial and therefore also violate the ban on left adjunct material c-commanded by Y1.

It is also necessary to pay attention to the phenomenon frequently referred to in the literature as “interlacing”. An “interlaced” or “interwoven” structure is one in which two substantive-adjective pairs both become discontinuous, with the adjective preceding the noun in both cases, and with both adjectives coming before both nouns—that is, an “interweaving” of two separate premodifier hyperbata. Interlacing in Latin poetry is the subject of an important study by Stanley Hoffer, who refers to the phenomenon by the name “double hyperbaton” or “double suspension”.<sup>34</sup> Interlaced structures are employed frequently in Horace’s *Odes*; I counted 45 occurrences of interlacing in the first book alone. Bermudez Ramiro notes that double adjective suspension is significantly more common in Horace’s *Odes* than double chiasmus, that is, both nouns coming before both adjectives, suggesting that Horace

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<sup>34</sup> Stanley Hoffer, “The Use of Adjective Interlacing (Double Hyperbaton) in Latin Poetry”, *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, Vol. 103 (2007), 299-340.



consciously favors this construction.<sup>35</sup> (39) below includes examples of interlacing drawn from all four books of the *Odes*:

(39) *omne capax movet urna nomen* (III.i)  
*cur/manat rara meas lacrima per genas* (IV.i)  
*cur facunda parum decoro/inter verba cadit lingua silentio* (IV.i)  
*donarem pateras grataque commodus,/Censorine, meis aera sodalibus* (IV.viii)  
*nolis longa ferae bella Numantiae...mollibus/aptari citharae modis* (II.xii)  
*atque benignius/depromere quadrimum Sabina,/o Thaliarche, merum diota* (I.ix)

Some of the examples of interlacing in the *Odes*, such as the “golden line” from III.i, feature verb-medial hyperbata; in others, such as the second, fourth, fifth and sixth examples from (39), the verb is external to the hyperbatic structure.

Hoffer’s thesis in his study of interlacing in Latin poetry is that interlacing, like the other “familiar features of high-style Latin poetry...[is] not evenly distributed throughout the text. Rather, their use is determined by various structural and semantic conditions.”<sup>36</sup> According to Hoffer, “[m]ost of the various conditions...can be referred to by a single principle, namely the ease or difficulty of comprehension for the reader (or listener):

I think it is often not sufficiently recognized how difficult the interlaced style must have been even for educated native speakers. The interlaced style exemplifies a leading aim of the learned style, to make the audience listen more carefully, to create a distance from ordinary speech that will force the audience to work with heightened concentration at thinking about and understanding the text.<sup>37</sup>

The intrinsic difficulty for the brain in processing interwoven structures results from the fact that there are multiple constituents that cannot be completely parsed when they are encountered, and therefore must be retained in the memory until they are able to be fully parsed. According to Hoffer, “[i]t would seem that the listener’s ‘focal memory’ [the working memory available for language processing in real time] could hold onto one suspended adjective much more easily than two.”<sup>38</sup> In natural language processing, a “parser” for a grammar is “an

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<sup>35</sup> Bermudez Ramiro 137.

<sup>36</sup> Hoffer 299.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 302.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

algorithm that analyzes a sentence and analyzes one or more structural descriptions to the sentence according to the grammar...The structural descriptions are necessary for further processing, for example, for semantic interpretation”.<sup>39</sup> Plainly stated, the parser figures out the syntax of the sentence before the semantics is added in by another module; it hangs the constituents on a tree in the proper arrangement before they are assigned semantic contents. A suspended adjective cannot be completely parsed when it is first encountered by the parser because it is impossible for the parser to tell what phrase it belongs to, and where it belongs on the tree.

Hoffer goes on to remark that “[t]he proliferation of interlacing in Latin poetry, to be sure, must have accustomed listeners to make the sort of effort required, but the absence of the interlaced style from prose shows that it remained alien from the natural production and processing of conversational language”.<sup>40</sup> Thus, in documenting that Horace, like other Latin poets of his period, uses interlaced constructions very frequently, we have provided further evidence of the divergence of poetic syntax from prose syntax in Latin.

However, we can make our case even more strongly. Hoffer identifies several additional factors that can make sentences containing interlaced constructions either easier or more difficult to process than they would be normally. One is the presence of a relation of syntactic dependence between the two adjective-noun pairs: “If the two adjective-noun pairs are syntactically connected, the mind can partially parse the two adjectives and therefore remember them more easily than completely unprocessed adjectives.”<sup>41</sup> He mentions two common types of syntactic dependence between the two hyperbata in interlaced constructions: adjective governance, in which one of the adjectives, often (but not necessarily) a participle, governs the case of the noun in the other hyperbaton

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<sup>39</sup> Aravind K. Joshi, “Natural Language Processing”, *Science*, New Series, Vol. 253, No. 5025 (1991), 1242-1249.

<sup>40</sup> Hoffer 303.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 306-7.

(40) *interfusa nitentes/vites aequora Cycladas* (I.xiv)  
*expertus vacuum Daedalus aëra* (I.iii)  
*unde vocalem temere insecutae/Orphea sylvae* (I.xii)  
*nec venenatis gravida sagittis,/Fusce, pharetra* (I.xxii)  
*metuende certa/Phoebe sagitta* (I.xii)  
*neglegis immeritis nocituram/postmodo te natis fraudem committere* (I.xxviii)

and genitive dependence, in which one noun is the head, and the other the complement, in a genitive construction

(41) *nolis longa ferae bella Numantiae...mollibus/aptari citharae modis* (II.xii)  
*mutata iuvenem figura/ales in terris imitaris almae/filius Maiæ* (I.ii)  
*non aestuosae grata Calabriae/armenta* (I.xxxi)  
*et invisi horrida Taenari/sedes Atlanteusque finis concutitur* (I.xxxiv).

In addition, even if the adjective-noun pairs are syntactically independent, it can help them to be partially parsed when they are encountered if a governing word, such as a verb or preposition, comes early in the sentence

(42) *cur/manat rara meas lacrima per genas* (IV.i)  
*donarem pateras grataque commodus,/Censorine, meis aera sodalibus*  
 (IV.viii)  
*me tabula sacer/votiva paries indicat uvida/suspendisse potenti/vestimenta*  
*maris deo* (I.v)  
*vile potabis modicis Sabinum/cantharis* (I.xx)

For instance, in the fourth example, the occurrence of the main verb *potabis* immediately after the adjective *vile* alerts the parser to the fact that *vile* is accusative, and modifies the direct object, not the subject, since an overt nominal subject with a finite verb in the second person would be odd.

Another factor discussed at length by Hoffer is collaborative diction—that is, the clustering of words that are similar in meaning, or that contribute to a single meaning. For example, a visual description might have several words for color and colored objects, along with verbs of seeing and appearance. According to Hoffer, “[t]his makes a passage easier to understand, since one can grasp the essential meaning of the first word or two. Accordingly, the collaborative style is ideally suited to highly-wrought verbal elaboration, including

interlacing.”<sup>42</sup> Horace employs collaborative semantics quite frequently in the sample from the first book of the *Odes*:

(43) *expertus vacuum Daedalus aëra* (I.iii)  
*dives ut aureis/mercator exsiccet culullis/vina Syra reparata merce* (I.xxxi)  
*tu pias laetis animas reponis/sedibus* (I.x)  
*et invisi horrida Taenari/sedes Atlanteusque finis concutitur* (I.xxxiv)  
*mea nec Falernae/temperant vites neque Formiani/pocula colles* (I.xx)  
*atque benignius/depromere quadrimus Sabina,/o Thaliarche, merum diota* (I.ix)  
*vile potabis modicis Sabinum/cantharis* (I.xx)

For instance, in each of the last three examples in (46) above, there are five words relating specifically to wine or wine-drinking (the verb *depromo* also appears in the context of wine-drinking in *Odes* I.xxxvii: *antehac nefas depromere Caecubum/cellis avitis*). All of these semantically related words are clustered together, which makes it easier for the reader or listener to anticipate the meaning of the sentence.

A related phenomenon is the frequent co-occurrence with interlacing (and with collaborative diction) of epithetic adjectives, conventionalized or quasi-technical vocabulary, or paraphrases from other works that would likely have been familiar to Horace’s highly educated audience. The use of this kind of vocabulary would also have made it easier for the reader or listener to guess the sentence’s meaning, even if the syntax was no easier to work out. Here are some examples of what Hoffer refers to as “adjectives of limited semantic context”<sup>43</sup> in *Odes* I:

(44) *vagus et sinistra/labitur ripa...uxorius amnis* (I.ii)  
*insignem pharetra/fraternaue umerum lyra* (I.xxi)  
*nec venenatis gravida sagittis,/Fusce, pharetra* (I.xxii)  
*nullum/saeva caput Proserpina fugit* (I.xxviii)  
*saevis Liburnis scilicet invidens/privata deduci superbo/non humilis mulier triumpho* (I.xxxvii)  
*albus ut obscuro deterget nubila caelo/saepe Notus* (I.vii)  
*Gallica nec lupatis/temperet ora frenis* (I.viii)  
*quis te solvere Thessalis/magus venenis...poterit* (I.xxvii)

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 310.

<sup>43</sup> Hoffer 310.

Regarding the first example in (44) above, Nisbet and Hubbard note that *vagus* was “a common epithet of rivers”, that the phrase *labi ripa* was commonly used to refer to “a river flowing within its banks”, and that the “[frivolous] picture of the doting Tiber” created by the adjective *uxorius*, combined with the “[t]he run-over between the third and fourth lines...suggests a river out of control”.<sup>44</sup> Thus, here is an example of conventionalized vocabulary, collaborative diction, and metrical form working in unison to create and emphasize a single, vivid meaning for this sentence, thus compensating for the difficulty in parsing created by the interlaced style. Regarding the sixth example, Nisbet and Hubbard inform us that *albus*, applied to the wind, is an “emphatic and pointed” epithet, by means of which “Horace [suggests] the technical term *λευκοντος* (the clearing south wind that blew in early January)”<sup>45</sup>. They also tell us that “*lupi* (*λυκοι* or *εχιννοι*) were spikes in the mouthpiece of a bit used to hurt the horse’s tongue and palate”<sup>46</sup> and that Thessaly, in the ancient world, was “the land of potent herbs...and of witches’ magic”<sup>47</sup>; thus, these examples also contain, in addition to collaborative diction, vocabulary that, in context, would have been relatively easy for an educated audience to interpret.

Hoffer also notes two forms of interlacing that are even more difficult. One is the interlacing of three or even four adjectives. I found two sentences with three separate suspended adjectives in *Odes* I; only in one of these, however, did Horace fail to resolve the first suspension before beginning the third:

(45)    *nunc et latentis proditor intumo/gratus puellae risus ab angulo* (I.ix)  
           *nec malis/divulsus querimoniis/suprema citius solvet amor die* (I.xiii)

And finally, one or more of the suspended adjectives may have an ambiguous case ending. This exacerbates the basic problem encountered by the parser when confronted with interlacing of

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<sup>44</sup> Nisbet and Hubbard 27.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 316.

adjectives: the ambiguous case ending adds one or more possibilities that the parser must consider before the adjective can be properly situated in the structural description of the sentence. Ambiguous case endings are quite common in sentences with adjective interlacing in Horace:

(46) non *aestuosae grata Calabriae/armenta* (I.xxxi)  
 et *uda/mobilibus pomaria rivis* (I.vii)  
 et *invisi horrida Taenari/sedes* Atlanteusque finis concutitur (I.xxxiv)  
 non *lenis* precibus fata recludere,/ *nigro* compulerit *Mercurius gregi* (I.xxiv)  
 cum tu *coemptos* undique *nobilis/libros Panaeti*...mutare...tendis (I.xxix)

Sometimes the formal ambiguity of an adjective is irrelevant to the basic meaning of the sentence. For example, it doesn't make a great deal of difference, so far as getting the gist of the sentence is concerned, whether *nobilis libros Panaeti* means "the noble books of Panaetus" or "the books of noble Panaetus". Indeed, Hoffer also notes that when ambiguous case endings occur in sentences with collaborative diction, the formal ambiguity may in fact be intentional.<sup>48</sup>

The relevance of all of this to the argument that is being made in this paper is this: some of the conditions illustrated in (40)-(46) above—namely, syntactic dependence, early placement of governing words, and ambiguous case endings—increase or decrease specifically the difficulty of parsing the sentence syntactically; others—namely, collaborative diction and highly specific vocabulary—increase or decrease specifically the difficulty of semantic interpretation. When we examine the sample of 45 occurrences of adjective interlacing in *Odes* I, an interesting correlation emerges. Of these 45 sentences, 14 exhibited some kind of syntactic dependency (either genitive dependence or adjective governance) between the two adjective-noun pairs; 10 had a governing word, usually a verb, placed before the second adjective in the interlaced structure; 23 contained adjectives with ambiguous case endings; and 37 were either definite or possible examples of collaborative diction (24 definite, 11 possible) or featured specialized or conventional vocabulary, or both. In brief, these statistics suggest that Horace

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<sup>48</sup> Hoffer 309.

normally attempts to make sentences that feature adjective interlacing easier for his reader or listener to interpret semantically, but neglects, roughly half of the time, to construct his interlaced sentences in such a way as to make them easier to parse. Thus, once again, it is in his syntax, not his semantics or pragmatics, that Horace departs most dramatically from the language of prose.

One final question that we can consider is the specific influence of meter on poetic syntax. I chose to draw my sample of adjective interlacing from *Odes* I because it is in this book that Horace utilizes the widest variety of lyric meters. Horace opens the volume with a particularly astonishing display of metrical virtuosity: the first nine poems of *Odes* I are all in different meters. A full, detailed study of the relationship between meter and syntax in Horace would be beyond the scope of this paper. However, I did examine the sample of adjective interlacing from *Odes* I to see if there was any correlation between the frequency of interlacing and specific meters or families of meters. I also took samples from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Vergil's *Eclogues*, and Horace's *Ars Poetica* in order to compare the frequency of interlacing in Horace's lyric poetry with its frequency in poems in hexameters by Horace and his contemporaries. My approach was very simple: count the total number of instances of adjective interlacing in all of the poems written in a given meter, count the total number of lines in those poems, and find the ratio of interlaced structures to lines for each meter. The data are presented in the table below:

Meter	Number of Instances	Number of Lines	Rate
First Asclepiadean	0	36	0
Second Asclepiadean	6	96	1/16
Third Asclepiadean	2	92	1/48
Fourth Asclepiadean	6	64	1/11
Fifth Asclepiadean	0	24	0
Sapphic	14	220	1/16
Second Sapphic	1	16	1/16
Alcaic	11	236	1/21
Alcmanic	4	68	1/17
Fourth Archilochean	0	20	0
Dactylic hexameters (Ovid)	21	400	1/19
Dactylic hexameters (Vergil)	9	83	1/9
Dactylic hexameters (Horace)	5	475	1/91

Note that all of the meters that have no instances of adjective interlacing—First Asclepiadean, Fifth Asclepiadean, and Fourth Archilochean—are also represented in only one poem each, so the sample size is too small to draw any conclusions.

There are two other outliers in this data set—the very low rates at which interlacing occurs in the four poems in the Third Asclepiadean meter and in the *Ars Poetica*. The *Ars Poetica*, although frequently treated as a separate composition, is part of Horace’s two books of *Epistles*. The *Epistles*, which were published in 20 and 14 B.C., are composed in what Roland Mayer refers to as a “plain style”, appropriate to the informal, epistolary format, and Horace “sees to it that his word order is more ‘natural’ and easier to grasp than before”.<sup>49</sup> The comparative infrequency of adjective interlacing, a particularly elevated poeticism, in the *Epistles* is a result of this conscious stylistic change, and not a consequence of writing in hexameters. The rate of occurrence of interlacing in the *Metamorphoses* and *Eclogues*, which is comparable to (and, in the case of the latter, higher than) the rate for most of the meters used in *Odes* I, confirms this assessment. As for the relatively few instances of interlacing in the

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<sup>49</sup> William S. Anderson, review of *Horace: Epistles, Book I*, by Roland Mayer. *Classical Philology*, Vol. 91, No. 2 (1996), 189-191.



four poems written in the Third Asclepiadean, I can think of nothing to suggest that this is due to anything but chance, especially since the rates for the other Asclepiadean systems are close to the average.

For all of the other meters that are significantly represented in *Odes* I—Second Asclepiadean, Fourth Asclepiadean, Sapphic Strophe, Alcaic Strophe, and Alcmanic Strophe—the rate of occurrence of interlacing is between once every eleven and once every twenty-one lines, and the frequency of interlacing in the hexametric poetry of Ovid and Vergil is similar. Thus, the evidence provided by this test does not suggest that the specific meters in which Horace composed his *Odes* systematically influenced his fondness for this particular construction that was alien to prose.

The systematic influence, or lack thereof, of metrical factors on the syntax of Latin poetry is significant. Intuitively, the less evidence we can find that specific meters exert a systematic influence on poetic syntax, the greater the possibility that the deviations from prose syntax that we observe in poetry would have been considered by educated speakers and readers of Latin to be, not (strictly speaking) ungrammatical, but rather characteristic of a certain kind of elevated style that was nonetheless recognizably related to the way they expressed themselves in speech and writing every day. If this is indeed so, the case for the relevance of data from poetry to Latin linguistics more generally is considerably strengthened. As I said, however, to examine in depth the relationship between syntax and meter in the *Odes* of Horace would be beyond the scope of this paper.

To conclude this section: The generalizations about the pragmatics of premodifier hyperbaton drawn by Devine and Stephens in *LWO* largely hold true, if we accept the argument that the frequency of discontinuous descriptive adjectives that precede their nouns is explained by reference to the ubiquitous use of connotative language in poetry. On the other hand, the generalizations they make about the syntax of premodifier hyperbaton, in particular the

constraint on left adjunct material within the scope of Y1 in the verb-medial types, are frequently violated in Horace. Moreover, we demonstrated that Horace is extremely fond of adjective interlacing, and that he frequently does not attempt to alleviate the difficulty of processing the syntax of sentences that feature interlacing, although he usually assists the reader or listener through the use of collaborative diction or adjectives of limited semantic application. Thus, we have provided additional strong evidence for the hypothesis that Horace's poetry deviates from prose syntax more frequently and systematically than prose pragmatics.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

What is the significance of these results? This paper, as I suggested in the Introduction, was essentially a trial run for a certain methodology and a certain set of hypotheses. The methodological question was whether it would be possible to essentially reverse the order in which Devine and Stephens do things—rather than gathering empirical evidence of the frequency with which certain word orders occur under certain conditions and attempting to draw inductive conclusions as to the rules of Latin word order in general, I started with the rules that these authors arrived at and attempted to deduce the conditions under which certain types of deviations from these rules occur—in order to generate interesting and statistically significant data on word order in Latin verse. The main hypothesis was that, the stronger the correlation between a certain regular word order and a certain pragmatic context, the less likely authors would be, even—or perhaps especially—in poetry, to deviate from this regular word order. Based on the analysis above, I believe that both the project and the hypothesis have been mostly successful, certainly successful enough to warrant further studies involving a greater number of authors and a broader range of grammatical phenomena. But suppose that such studies were carried out, and the hypotheses confirmed even more strongly; what would be the point? Would we not be left with a set of results drawn from too small and marked a corpus to

be of significance for the field of Latin linguistics generally, and too technical and pedantic to excite people who are interested primarily in Latin literature *qua* literature?

Obviously, I do not think so. With regard to the significance of these results for the broader field of Latin linguistics, it is *prima facie* possible to think of poetry, as Harm Pinkster does, as simply not obeying the rules of word order and therefore not to be bothered with; but it is also *prima facie* possible to think of poetry as, not disregarding, but stretching the rules, and therefore of significant interest to theoretically-minded Latin linguists who are interested in testing the limits of their theories of word order. If it could be shown that the deviations from standard word order observed in Latin poetry were not random or irrational, but exhibited some interesting correlations, this would be a strong argument for the utility of further studies of Latin verse word order as part of the larger systematic inquiry into the workings, from a theoretical perspective, of Latin syntax.

These results, and the hypothesis that they strengthen, are potentially of still greater interest to scholars of literature; for, as the discussion of the quotes from Pound and Eliot were meant to suggest, this hypothesis leads to fascinating big-picture speculation as to the nature of poetic language, both in ancient poetry and more generally (and the two are not unrelated, considering the enormous influence exerted on early modern and modern poetry by classical models). The idea is that the precise articulation of informational structure and the simultaneous straining of syntactic regularities lie at the very heart of the poetic sensibility and combine to play a large part in creating the air of oracular mystery and authority that seems to be so essential to poetry. Whether such speculation is on the right track is less important to me, however, than that the readers of this paper should come to realize that a deep and precise understanding of the Latin language, whether drawing on the philological tradition or high-powered, 20<sup>th</sup>-century linguistics, is not incompatible with, but essential to, the study and appreciation of Latin literature.

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